

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCHOOLS, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY PANEL

11<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2012

A MEETING of the SCHOOLS, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the MANSION HOUSE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2012

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Hilary McNamee  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Rachel Hodson

Councillors Andrew Bosmans, Monty Cuthbert, Sandra Holland, Alan Jones R. Allan Jones, Jane Kidd, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Sue McGuinness, Sue Wilkinson, Doreen Woodhouse and Mr J Parkes (Parent Governor Primary Sector) and Mr Jim Board (UNISON).

Also in attendance: Councillors John Mounsey and Sue Phillips, Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, respectively.

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joe Blackham and Mr J Hoare (Diocese of Sheffield Church of England).

ACTION

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor Jane Kidd declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item no.6 (see minute number 11), relating to how the voluntary sector was to be included in 'One Team Working'. All to note

9. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2012

Councillor Bosmans enquired if a response had been received from Councillor Tatton-Kelly outlining an update on his key priorities, minute number 4 refers.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) a request be forwarded to Councillor Tatton-Kelly, Cabinet Member for Scrutiny Officer

Children and Young People, for an update on his key priorities for 2011/12.

- (2) the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>TH</sup> June, 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. All to note

10. PUBLIC STATEMENTS.

There were no public statements. All to note

11. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – QUARTER 1 2012/2013

The Panel considered a report detailing the first quarterly key performance and budgetary issues in the Children and Young People's Service.

The Director of Children and Young People's (CYP) Service outlined progress made against the five key priorities of the CYP Improvement Plan, highlighting that for the first quarter progress against objectives had been good.

The five priorities addressed were:-

1. Continue to raise educational standards for all children and young people;
2. Improve professional practice, particularly in safeguarding and children in care, through managers effectively managing performance;
3. Improve the outcomes for children and young people in care and care leavers, by modernising and improve the children in care service through developing a more family based service and moving children speedily to permanence;
4. Develop a whole system approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, including in partnership with RDaSH, implementing the One Team Working Model; and
5. Providing effective financial management including improving value for money and making the savings in the Council's budget.

The Chair reminded the Panel that the SCYP budget group would be discussing the budget at the conclusion of this meeting. Concern was expressed relating to the projected overspend and even that actual spend on agency staff was reducing, it was still not sustainable. The position was noted and welcomed that the Panel's budget working group would be reviewing the issue.

With regard to elective home education, the Chair acknowledged the effort over recent months to ensure as many children as possible were in mainstream education but questioned why numbers had increased. The Director of Children and Young People's Service explained that her concerns were shared and stressed that there was a need to strengthen efforts to reduce the numbers. To achieve this certain mechanisms could be used, for example, ensuring the issue of return to school notices. The Panel noted that elective home education was a legal option for parents to provide their child(ren) with a learning environment as an alternative to mainstream schooling and there were a number of reasons why parents would choose this method, for example:- cultural, religious beliefs and behavioural.

In response to a query relating to recent English examination results, it was explained that representations had been made by the Local Authority to Ofqual and the AQA English Exam Board and the outcome of discussions were awaited.

A question was raised in relation to numbers attending pupil referral units following the closure of Nexus and Springboard centres. It was explained that some pupils had reached the end of their education and some had transferred to the area consortia which was a more inclusive educational model.

Concern was expressed with regard to what the Local Authority's role was when Ofsted graded a school as poor. It was explained that if there was concern with a school's performance then the Local Authority had a duty to give support, for example, in some cases poor rated primary schools had been linked with outstanding schools introducing a new leadership team.

With regard to children spending less time on child protection plans (CPP), it was outlined that the performance indicators remained in place whilst ever a

child was of child age. It was noted that there could be a long period of time between each CPP, if more than one was required in a child's lifetime. It was stressed that children on CPP's were being audited at 15 month intervals.

Discussion briefly touched on the percentage of social workers that were permanently employed by the Council and those employed through agencies. It was reported that 15 additional social workers had recently been employed by the Local Authority, with most being newly qualified and that a further recruitment campaign was being undertaken. Members questioned what action could be taken to retain staff, whilst recognising there were no easy answers. It was explained that initiatives had started to be put in place, for example improved financial incentives and the movement of 400 cases to create more suitable workloads.

Other issues addressed by the Panel included:-

- Staff sickness and the impact it had on the budget;
- The Local Authority having the highest numbers of children in care (CIC) ever;
- Improved CIC placement stability;
- NEETS – CIC and care leavers – the Authority was being more proactive in offering apprenticeships, training and mentoring;
- One Team Working and how the voluntary sector could be included.
- Length of time a child may have to wait to see a doctor at the weekend, when they had been the victim of sexual abuse;
- Appendix A of the report – Objective: Through partnership working with RDaSH, developing a whole system approach to improving outcomes for children and young people. The Panel requested if actions and progress against this objective could be provided on future reports.

Assistant  
Director,  
Children and  
Families

Policy and  
Performance  
Manager

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the report, be noted.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN 2012/13

Members received a report updating the Panel on it's Work Plan for 2012/13.

The Scrutiny Officer reported on the following issues:-

Recommendations made to the Executive update 2011/12 All to note.

An update on the recommendations made to the Executive by the Panel during 2011/12 was circulated to the Panel for information.

Children's Trust Board All to note.

The Panel noted the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June, attached to the report. Councillor McNamee reported that unfortunately she had been unable to attend the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> September, due to a clash with the Full Council meeting.

Corporate Parenting Panel

Councillor Bosmans updated the Panel on the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June, to accompany the minutes circulated with the report. All to Note

SCYP Scrutiny Budget and Performance Group Scrutiny Officer

The Panel was reminded of the membership of the above group, detailed below, and noted that Councillors would be meeting with officers at the conclusion of this meeting to finalise details to be addressed.

Councillors, Hilary McNamee, Rachel Hodson, Sue Wilkinson, Tracey Leyland-Jepson and Andrew Bosmans

Sex Education and Teenage Pregnancy Assistant Director Children and Families/ Scrutiny Officer

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Officer, the Panel outlined the areas they wished to address as part of the Sex Education and Teenage Pregnancy review. The Assistant Director, Children and Families outlined information that could be provided and the Panel agreed to consider the issue at the meeting programmed for January. Councillors appointed to undertake any necessary pre-work were:-

Jane Kidd  
Rachel Hodson  
Tracey Leyland-Jepson  
Sue McGuinness

## Careers Advice and Guidance

It was reported to Members that the Regeneration and Environment Panel on 3<sup>rd</sup> September considered an information report relating to the work and skills partnership, established in March, 2012. The Scrutiny Officer circulated a copy of this report to the Panel for information. It addressed progress in improving the skills Doncaster's residents have in order to support economic growth across the Borough.

Part of future work related to:

- Delivery of a product that brought up-to-date careers information, advice and guidance in place to pupils, teachers, job seekers and businesses alike; and
- Complete the delivery of our Local Market Information (LMI) survey and ensure that the Borough's training provision, careers guidance offered to children and young people and adults and the business support offered to new and existing businesses is matched again the results found.

The LMI was a piece of evidence that the partnership was developing to assess what skills were required and would help build information on the type of careers and advice and guidance required. The Panel acknowledged that this evidence would not be available for consideration until November.

Members recognised that this piece of work was very similar to the review this Panel wished to undertake and agreed with the Regeneration and Environment (R and E) Panel that a joint review would be the most sensible way to proceed.

The Scrutiny Officer outlined that there could be a joint Panel or, as preferred by the R and E panel, a working group be appointed to undertake the review.

The Panel appointed the following Councillors to work with the R and E Panel on the joint review:-

Andrew Bosmans, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Alan Jones and Doreen Woodhouse.

In response to a query, it was noted that the Special

Educational Needs Review (SEN) due to be considered at this meeting had been delayed.

RESOLVED that:-

Scrutiny  
Officer

- (1) the report, be noted;
- (2) a review into teenage pregnancy of children in care be undertaken at the Panel's meeting in January;
- (3) Councillors Jane Kidd, Rachel Hodson, Tracey Leyland-Jepson and Sue McGuinness be appointed to undertake any pre-work required for the teenage pregnancy of children in care review;
- (4) Councillors Andrew Bosmans, Tracey Leyland-Jepson, Alan Jones and Doreen Woodhouse be appointed to undertake work on the careers advice and guidance review with the R and E Panel.